

National Transportation Safety Board  
Washington, DC 20594

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Brief of Accident

Adopted 05/29/2007

LAX07CA098 File No. 21479	03/03/2007	Visalia, CA	Aircraft Reg No. N6628U	Time (Local): 07:45 PST		
Make/Model:	Mooney / M20D			Fatal	Serious	Minor/None
Engine Make/Model:	Lycoming / O-360-A1D		Crew	0	0	1
Aircraft Damage:	Substantial		Pass	0	0	1
Number of Engines:	1					
Operating Certificate(s):	None					
Type of Flight Operation:	Personal					
Reg. Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation					
Last Depart. Point: CONCORD, CA			Condition of Light: Day			
Destination: VISALIA, CA			Weather Info Src: Weather Observation Facility			
Airport Proximity: Off Airport/Airstrip			Basic Weather: Visual Conditions			
			Lowest Ceiling: None			
			Visibility: 10.00 SM			
			Wind Dir/Speed: 090 / 004 Kts			
			Temperature (°C): 8			
			Precip/Obscuration: No Obscuration; No Precipitation			
Pilot-in-Command	Age: 62		Flight Time (Hours)			
Certificate(s)/Rating(s)			Total All Aircraft: 1083			
Private; Single-engine Land			Last 90 Days: Unk/Nr			
Instrument Ratings			Total Make/Model: 320			
None			Total Instrument Time: UnK/Nr			

The airplane collided with a berm during a forced landing in an industrial building construction site following a loss of engine power. The pilot stated that during the preflight inspection he did not check the fuel quantity. He stated that a month prior to the accident the airplane had been "topped off," and then flown about an hour from the right fuel tank. The pilot also said that during the 160 nautical mile accident flight he did not recall switching fuel tanks. About 3 miles north of the destination airport the engine sputtered and lost power. He switched tanks and activated the electric fuel boost pump, the engine restarted momentarily, then sputtered and lost power again. The pilot switched tanks three or four more times to no avail. Post accident inspection of the airplane by the FAA revealed that the right fuel tank was empty and the left tank contained about 6 gallons of 100LL aviation fuel. The fuel line to the carburetor did not contain any fuel. The fuel selector valve was selected to the right tank position. The electric fuel pump was activated and no fuel pressure indication was observed. The fuel selector handle was moved to the left fuel tank position and a fuel pressure indication was observed in the normal operating range.

Brief of Accident (Continued)

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Occurrence #1:      LOSS OF ENGINE POWER(TOTAL) - NONMECHANICAL  
Phase of Operation: DESCENT

Findings

1. (C) FLUID,FUEL - STARVATION
  2. FUEL SUPPLY - NOT VERIFIED - PILOT IN COMMAND
  3. (C) FUEL MANAGEMENT - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2:      FORCED LANDING  
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

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Occurrence #3:      ON GROUND/WATER ENCOUNTER WITH TERRAIN/WATER  
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY LANDING

Findings

4. TERRAIN CONDITION - BERM

Findings Legend: (C) = Cause, (F) = Factor

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The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows.  
The pilot's inadequate in-flight fuel system management, which resulted in fuel starvation and a loss of engine power.